



Commodity Specification

CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

JUNE 2006



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I. GENERAL

A. Product Description

Frozen, fully cooked, dark chicken fajita strips (commodity) produced under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Chicken Fajita Strips (226030) - Frozen, fully cooked, dark chicken fajita strips, produced from ready-to-cook boneless, skinless drumsticks, thighs, and/or legs. The commodity will be packaged 5 or 10 pounds (2.27 or 4.54 kg) per plastic-film bag to a net weight of 30 pounds (13.61 kg) in each fiberboard shipping container. A purchase unit will consist of 1,300 shipping containers totaling 39,000 pounds (17,690 kg).

The name of the commodity is “chicken fajita strips,” and the description of the commodity is “strips of whole muscle dark chicken meat with grill markings.”

B. Food Defense Requirements

Contractors and subcontractors participating in the commodity purchase program must have a documented food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant’s production processes and includes the storage and transportation of finished product after production. The plan shall address the following areas: (1) food defense plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter and processing, including all raw material sources; (4) shipping and receiving; (5) storage; (6) water and ice supply; (7) mail handling; (8) personnel security; and (9) controlled access to production and storage areas. The food defense plan shall be made available to USDA Certification Agents immediately upon request. Verification of the Food Defense Program at the processing, storage, and distribution facility will be conducted by the USDA Certification Agents.

C. Commodity Complaints

The contractor/producer must immediately report all complaints received on the commodity to the Contracting Officer.

II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATION

A. Basic Requirements

1. Date Processed. The commodity must not be processed or packaged more than 30 days prior to the first day of the delivery period.

2. Class. The commodity must be prepared from freshly slaughtered broiler/fryer chickens (AMS § 70.201(c)) or parts (AMS § 70.210).

3. Origin of Chickens. The commodity must be produced and processed from chickens that were produced, raised, and processed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. If the contractor processes or handles chicken carcasses and parts originating from sources other than the United

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States, its territories or possessions, The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the contractor must have an acceptable identification and segregation plan for those chicken carcasses and parts to ensure they are not used in the commodity produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA (Grader), and the Contracting Officer or agent thereof upon request. The contractor must ensure that both the contractor and subcontractor(s) maintain records such as invoices, or production and inventory records evidencing product origin, and make such records available for review by the Grader or other Government official(s) in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1.

4. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 CFR part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (Inspector). Inspection for contract and Specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 CFR part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 et seq.) under the supervision of a Grader. The Grader will be responsible for certification of compliance with the requirements of this Specification for chilled chicken carcasses and parts; formulating, marinating, cooking, and slicing chicken into fajita strips; chicken fajita strips; freezing; packaging and packing; labeling and marking; net weight; and checkloading.

5. FSIS Requirements. The commodity must be produced and processed in an FSIS federally inspected establishment, be accurately marked and/or labeled, and meet all FSIS regulatory requirements, including all microbiological testing requirements, currently in place.

6. USDA Sampling Option. USDA may select an additional commodity for further inspection or may draw samples for laboratory analyses.

7. Chicken from Other Plants. Chilled chicken and chicken parts may be transferred or obtained from other processing plants, provided they: (1) have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with this Specification; and (2) comply with the freshly slaughtered, organoleptic, temperature, and other applicable requirements of this Specification as evidenced by USDA certification.

a. Type, class, and specific name of the product, part, or meat; date slaughtered; and the USDA-assigned plant number must be shown on each shipping container.

b. The chilled chicken and chicken parts must be at an internal temperature not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C) when shipped from the origin plant and when received at the destination plant.

B. Requirements for Meat

1. Time Requirements. The chilled ready-to-cook chicken and bone-in, skin-on chicken parts must be fabricated into cooked commodity within 7 calendar days after the date

II.B.1.

of slaughter. Within this 7-day timeframe, deboned meat from the chicken and chicken parts must be fabricated into cooked commodity within 4 days after deboning.

2. Maximum Temperature. The temperature of the carcasses, boneless parts, or meat must not exceed 55 °F (12.8 °C) at any time during the preparation and processing into the commodity.

3. Cooling Requirements. The meat which is not used in the commodity on a continuous basis after deboning must be cooled by cooling methods and media (see II.B.4) that ensure that the internal product temperature is lowered to not higher than 40°F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C). No frozen or previously frozen chicken, chicken strips, or fajita meat may be used in the commodity.

4. Cooling Medium.

a. Cooling methods and media (e.g., use of liquid carbon dioxide (CO₂) or liquid nitrogen (N₂)) may be used to maintain the temperature of the meat.

b. Water, refrigerated water, slush ice and water, or ice used to cool or maintain the temperature of the meat must not be incorporated into the commodity. Liquid associated with normal product weepage is acceptable.

5. Meat. The following kinds of chicken meat must be used to prepare the commodity. The meat must be: (a) boneless, skinless whole or half legs (not more than one-half of the meat missing), or (b) boneless, skinless, whole or half drumsticks and/or thighs (not more than one-half of the meat missing), otherwise hereafter known as “meat” or “dark chicken meat.”

6. Unacceptable Meat. No frozen or previously frozen meat may be used. Mechanically separated (comminuted), finely ground, flaked, or finely chopped chicken meat cannot be used.

7. Bone, Skin, and Fat. The bones, skin, and excess fat must be removed from the meat before use. Excess fat includes: (a) visible fat not integrated in the muscle tissue that exceeds an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle with a diameter of 1.50 inches (3.81 cm), and (b) fat deposit not integrated in the muscle that extends more than 0.50 inches (1.27 cm) beyond the meat tissue.

8. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects.

a. Organoleptic requirements. Boneless, skinless meat will be examined on a continuous basis for organoleptic requirements. If the meat does not comply with the organoleptic requirements, the meat the samples represent will be rejected for use in the commodity.

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b. Defects. Boneless, skinless meat will be examined for defects on a sample basis.

(1) Prior to marinating, 30 pieces of boneless, skinless meat will be sampled and examined separately for the defects (see II.B.8.b.(2)) shown in Table 1. The frequency of sampling and the number of defects allowed will be those outlined in the Poultry Programs Sample Plan Level 1. Separate examinations will be made for (a) bone and (b) other defects.

(2) Regardless of the kind and number of defects found (within Table 1), any sample with bone or hard bone-like material will be cause for the rejection of the product the sample represents.

(3) If the sample has more defects than the maximum tolerance for the sample plan, the meat the sample represents will be rejected.

Table 1. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects for Meat

Organoleptic Requirements:	<p>Criteria: The meat must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Be free of rancidity; free of fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy tallowy, oily, metallic, chlorine, other foreign or off-odors. (2) Be free of foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal, plastic). (3) Show no evidence of mishandling or deterioration. (4) Have a bright color and show no evidence of dehydration or freezing and thawing.
<p>Meat Defects:</p> <p>Bone:</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p>Bone or hard bone-like material.</p> <p>A boneless, skinless: thigh, drumstick, or leg with more than one-half of the meat missing.</p> <p>Moderate discolorations, cartilage, or blood clots.</p> <p>Lightly shaded discolorations exceeding an aggregate area equivalent to a circle with a diameter of 0.50 inch (1.27 cm). Slight discolorations are permitted, provided the discoloration does not detract from the overall appearance of the meat.</p> <p>Visible fat not integrated in the muscle tissue that exceeds an aggregate area of a circle with a diameter of 1.50 inch (3.81 cm).</p> <p>Fat deposits not integrated in the muscle tissue that extend more than 0.50 inch (1.27 cm) beyond the meat tissue.</p>
Defects for Boneless, Skinless Thighs:	Tendon or tendinous material.
Defects for Boneless, Skinless Drumsticks and Legs:	Tendon or tendinous material that is soft-like in texture and extends or is greater than 0.50 inch (1.27 cm) beyond the meat tissue.
Skin Defects:	A defect for skin is the presence of skin.

II.

C. Formulation and Processing of the Commodity

1. Processing Sequence. The marinating and pressing or pressing and marinating, cooking, cutting into strips, and individual freezing of the commodity must be a continuous sequential process.

2. Formula. The commodity will be produced from 100 percent marinated boneless, skinless chicken meat (II.B.5.-II.B.8.).

3. Marinade.

a. Chilled boneless, skinless meat must be marinated in a solution of water, spices/seasonings, starch(es), and sodium phosphates in accordance with the following formulation (otherwise hereafter known as “marinating solution”), before cooking.

Marinating Solution:	Percent of Total
Water (maximum)	65.63
Spices/Seasonings (see II.C.4.) (maximum)	25.00
Starch(es)	6.25
Sodium Phosphate(s) (maximum)	<u>3.12</u>
	100.00

(1) Water may consist of water only or water and ice.

(2) Starch(es) must be an isolated soy protein and/or a modified food starch.

(3) Maximum percentage for sodium phosphate will include any phosphates used in the combined marinating solution (II.C.3.a.) and spice/seasoning formulation (II.C.4.).

b. The starch(es) and sodium phosphate must be thoroughly mixed with water. The spices must be the last ingredient added to the marinating solution.

c. The marinating solution must be incorporated into the meat by tumbling or massaging. The tumbling or massaging must be accomplished without shredding or mutilating the pieces of meat.

d. The marinating solution percentage incorporated within tumbled or massaged marinated boneless, skinless meat must not exceed 16 percent (i.e., marinade increases the weight of the meat by a maximum of 16 percent over the original ready-to-cook weight).

II.C.

4. Spices. Proportions of spices/seasonings must consist of the following:

	<u>Maximum Percent</u>
Salt	48.00
Sugar	18.00
Sodium phosphate(s)	16.00
Black pepper	10.00
Onion powder	10.00
Garlic powder	10.00
Chili powder	5.00
Binders (food starch)	5.00
Grilled and/or smoke flavoring	5.00
Citric acid/lemon juice/lime juice/vinegar	5.00
Red pepper	2.00
Other spices, extractives, or ingredients	<u>20.00</u>
	100.00

a. Sugar may be sucrose, brown sugar, dextrose, or a combination thereof.

b. The contractor must furnish the Grader a statement from the spice manufacturer certifying that the spices/seasoning and spice/seasoning amounts are in compliance with the spice formulation requirement prior to commodity production. If the spice formulation is produced by the contractor/processor at the plant (or some other facility), the Grader must certify compliance prior to commodity production.

c. Processing aids (e.g., anti-caking, anti-dusting agents, or other manufacturing aids) are allowed. If processing agents are used, the ingredients and amount of ingredients listed in the formulations (II.C.3. and II.C.4.) must remain the same.

5. Product Compliance. Formulated batches of marinating solution and marinated meat that do not comply with the requirements in II.C.2.-4. will be rejected for use in the commodity.

D. Cooking, Slicing, and Freezing

1. Uniform Thickness (Pressing). The marinated meat must be passed through a press to assist in creating an approximately uniform thickness.

2. Cooking and Grill Markings.

a. The commodity must reach an internal temperature of at least 160 °F (71.1 °C) during cooking. The time and temperature of cooking must provide cooked commodity that complies with the organoleptic requirements in II.E.1. (Table 2).

II.D.2.

b. Parallel grill markings are required on one surface of the meat/fajita strip.

3. Slicing into Strips. The meat must be cut/sliced into fajita strips. All cuts must be in a manner that will provide strips of whole muscle dark chicken meat with reasonably smooth outer surfaces with no tears along the cut edges. These cuts may be made by mechanical means. The strips must be a minimum 0.375 inch (3/8 inch) (0.95 cm) in width.

4. Individual Freezing.

a. The cooked commodity must be chilled and individually frozen so the individual fajita strips do not stick together after they are packaged and packed in shipping containers.

b. Immediately after cooking is completed, the internal product temperature of the cooked commodity must be lowered continuously by an in-line chilling/freezing system.

c. Zero degrees Fahrenheit (-17.8°C) within 72-hours freezing verification will be made as the commodity exits the in-line chilling/freezing system as follows:

(1) Individually frozen commodity exiting an in-line chilling/freezing system with internal product temperatures higher than 0 °F (-17.8 °C) must be packaged and placed in a freezer. The internal product temperature must be lowered to 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower within 72 hours from the time the commodity enters the freezer.

(2) Individually frozen commodity exiting an in-line chilling/freezing system with internal product temperatures 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower is in compliance with the 72-hour freezing requirement (in II.D.4.c.(1)).

(3) In all cases, the commodity must be placed in a freezer within 4 hours of packaging.

5. Reprocessing.

a. Product eligible for reprocessing. Raw marinated, or undercooked marinated boneless, skinless meat may be reprocessed by pre-browning or cooking.

b. Product ineligible for reprocessing. Cooked boneless, skinless meat or cooked fajita strips which do not meet the organoleptic requirements may not be reprocessed for use under this Specification.

E. Requirements for Cooked Commodity

1. Organoleptic Requirements. A sample of 10 cooked fajita strips will be sampled and examined for the organoleptic requirements shown in Table 2. If any sample of commodity does not comply with the organoleptic requirements, the commodity the sample represents will be rejected for use under this Specification.

Table 2. Organoleptic Requirements for Cooked Commodity

Organoleptic Requirements: Examined after cooking prior to freezing.	Criteria: (a) The commodity must be free of: (i) rancidity; (ii) metallic, overcooked, burnt, scorched, bitter, oxidized, stale, fruity, beany, oily, soapy, or other odors or flavors foreign to properly prepared and cooked chicken fajita strips; and (iii) foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal). (b) The commodity must not be dry; that is, it must not lack moistness or be devoid of moisture.
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2. Metal Detection. The commodity must be examined by a metal detection device capable of detecting metallic contaminants including, but not limited to, stainless steel shavings, metal clips, metal fragments from cutting equipment, and pieces of wire. The commodity must be examined: (a) prior to packaging; or (b) after it is packaged; or (c) packed in shipping containers in accordance with AMS 910, Poultry Grader's Handbook. Commodity found to be contaminated with metal will be handled in accordance with FSIS procedures. Other procedures for examination of the commodity must be approved by the Deputy Administrator of Poultry Programs, in writing.

F. Packaging and Packing.

1. Materials. All packaging and packing materials must be clean and in new condition, must be tamper-evident, must not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity, must be safe (cannot adulterate product or be injurious to health) for use in contact with food products, and must be tamper-evident. Tamper-evident is defined as packaging or packing materials with one or more indicators or barriers to entry, which, if breached or missing, can reasonably be expected to provide visible evidence that tampering has occurred.

a. Plastic-film bags. Bags for packaging the commodity must be a polyethylene film bag with a wall thickness of not less than 2 mil (0.002 inch); and must protect the commodity from dehydration, freezer burn, or quality deterioration during the conditions of use. Metal wire ties, paper-coated wire ties, or staples must not be used for sealing plastic-film bags. Plastic-coated wire ties may be used, provided the wire and plastic are bonded so that under the conditions of use, the wire and plastic do not separate, the wire is not exposed, and the plastic does not crack or break. Further, the ties must be constructed to preclude damage to the packaging material and be of sufficient size and contrasting color to make them easily seen.

b. Shipping containers. Shipping containers must: (1) be good commercial fiberboard containers which are acceptable by common or other carrier for safe transport to point of destination; (2) be of such size to pack the commodity without slack filling or bulging; (3) withstand the stresses of handling, shipping, stacking, and storage; and (4) be closed by commercially accepted methods and materials. Steel or wire straps must not be used for final closure. Staples must not be used for final closure of shipping containers. Adhesive or staples

II.F.1.b.

cannot be used to fasten the top portion of telescope-style containers to the bottom portion. Staples may be used to manufacture and to assemble the fiberboard shipping containers, provided the staples are fastened into the container and tightly clenched to eliminate sharp edges prior to packing the commodity into the shipping containers.

2. Packaging. Approximately 5 or 10 pounds (2.27 or 4.54 kg) of commodity must be packaged in a plastic-film bag. The bag must be of a length that can be readily and securely closed. The bag must be sealed or closed with a nonmetallic device (except for plastic-coated wire ties) that will protect the commodity from contamination, dehydration, and freezer burn.

3. Packing. Six 5-pound (2.27-kg) or three 10-pound (4.54-kg) bags with 30 pounds (13.61 kg) net weight of commodity must be packed in a fiberboard shipping container.

III. LABELING

Commercial labeling (III.A. and III.D.-E.) or USDA labeling (III.B.-E.) must be used. When commercial or USDA labeling is selected, both the packages and shipping containers within a purchase unit must be labeled in that format. **THE CONTRACTOR MUST USE THE SAME LABEL FORMAT (EITHER COMMERCIAL OR USDA) WITHIN A PURCHASE UNIT.**

A. Commercial Labeling Requirements

Commercially labeled packages and shipping containers must be labeled in accordance with FSIS requirements. Labeling must be approved by FSIS prior to acceptance for use under this Specification.

1. Distributor Labels. Commercial labels must be the processor's own commercial label. Distributors' labels will not be allowed.

2. Traceable Product. The processor must establish a product identification and record system that clearly links product by place and time of manufacture to specific USDA contracts and destinations. When the company uses the same commercial label for the product certified as complying with this Specification and commercial product, the identification system must differentiate between USDA and non-USDA products. An alpha numeric code may be used for information that is in addition to FSIS labeling requirements. The required product identification and record system, including codes, must be reviewed by USDA before production begins for the contract(s).

B. USDA Labeling Requirements

When USDA labeling is used, any deviations from the USDA labeling requirements in this Specification must be approved by the Contracting Officer, in writing, prior to start of production. Labeling and marking of the product must be in accordance with this Specification. Labeling and marking information must be water-fast, nonsmearing, of a contrasting color, and legible.

III.B.

1. USDA Labeled Packages

No labeling information is required on the packaging materials.

2. USDA Labeled Shipping Containers

a. Labeling and Marking Information

(1) Requirements. Labeling and marking information must be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on each shipping container; or printed on a pressure-sensitive label and applied to each shipping container. This information, in essentially the same layout, is provided in EXHIBITS 1 and 2.

(2) Nutritional Labeling. A nutritional label, indicating the nutrient content of the commodity, is required on the principal display panel of each shipping container of chicken fajita strips. This nutritional facts information or “Nutrition Facts Label” must comply with all labeling requirements of FSIS, and, in addition, include the declaration of trans fat consistent with FSIS policy. The nutrition facts information must be preprinted on the principal display panel of each shipping container; or printed on a pressure-sensitive label and applied to the principal display panel of each shipping container. The pressure-sensitive label must not cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

(3) Ingredient labeling. Must comply with all labeling requirements of FSIS. In addition, include the source declaration of allergens when the source is not identified in the names of ingredients from any of the eight major allergens categories, consistent with FSIS policy.

b. Universal product bar code.

(1) A Universal Product Code (UPC), symbol and code, called Interleaved 2 of 5 (I 2/5), must appear on each shipping container. The complete code, including the check digit, must be printed in machine-readable and human-readable form. The start and stop indicators will be included in the bar codes. Printing, readability, and scanability of the bar code must be in accordance with UPC guidelines published by Uniform Code Council, Inc., 1009 Lenox Drive, Suite 202, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648, (609)620-0200.

(2) The contractor will use the code furnished by USDA. USDA has acquired a unique processor's identification number for the commodity purchase programs and will use this item code for the commodity purchased under this Specification. The contractors need not join Uniform Code Council, Inc.

(3) The 14-digit UPC code for shipping containers of chicken fajita strips is:
1 07 15001 01563 8

(4) The UPC code must be placed in the lower right-hand corner of the principal display panel of each shipping container.

III.B.2.

c. Recycle Symbol and Statement. The contractor shall place somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container the recycle symbol shown in EXHIBIT 3. The statement “PLEASE RECYCLE” is to be placed under the symbol. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed in permanent ink.

d. Inventory Control Label. The processor may use a pressure-sensitive label to place any additional information (including bar codes) on the shipping container for processor inventory control purposes. This label may be applied somewhere on the surface of the shipping container. The label must not cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

C. Use of Previously Printed USDA Labeling Materials

Carryover inventories of existing supplies of printed packing materials (USDA labeling) from the Commodity Specification for Chicken Fajita Strips dated May 2005 may be used. If the ingredients statement, or nutrition facts information or panel changes from that printed on existing supplies, the contractor/processor must request temporary approval for use of carryover inventories from FSIS.

Shipping containers or labels with incorrect: (1) contract number, (2) plant number, (3) net weight, (4) date packed, must be corrected before they are used. The incorrect information must be blocked out and the correct information legibly printed, stamped, or stenciled in permanent ink. Additionally, the name, address, and phone number of the processor must appear on each shipping container.

D. Additional Labeling Issues

The following are not acceptable for use under this Specification:

1. Commercial labels that do not have a processor traceability system and code.
2. Commercial labeling traceability coding and systems that have not been reviewed by a representative of USDA, AMS Poultry Programs, Grading Branch.
3. Distributor commercial labels.
4. Two or more different commercial labels in the same purchase unit.
5. Commercial labels and USDA labels in the same purchase unit.

E. F.a.s. Vessel Deliveries

F.a.s. vessel deliveries that are not source loaded in a seavan are required to show the final destination’s overseas address as provided in the Notice to Deliver. The address must be clearly printed on at least two sides of each pallet.

IV. FINAL EXAMINATION OF PACKAGED AND PACKED COMMODITY

A. Material and Net Weight Compliance

1. Verification of Materials and Defects.

a. Verification of packaging and packing materials. The contractor must verify compliance with packaging, packing, and marking material requirements by furnishing the Grader the following certification on company stationery signed by a person authorized to do so by the contractor:

“(I)/(We) certify that the packaging, packing, and marking materials used for any commodity presented for acceptance under the terms of the Commodity Specification for Chicken Fajita Strips dated June 2006, comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name _____

Title _____”

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

b. Packaging defects. Packages in a delivery unit will be examined for defects that affect protection, expose product, permit dehydration or freezer burn, or quality deterioration during storage, such as tears, holes, or improperly sealed or closed packages.

c. Packing defects. Shipping containers in a delivery unit will be examined for condition, labeling, and marking defects according to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers.

d. Tolerance for defects. If samples of packaged commodity or the shipping containers in a delivery unit have more defects than the maximum tolerance for the applicable USDA, AMS Poultry Programs’ sample plan, the delivery unit will be rejected.

2. Net Weight.

a. A purchase unit or delivery unit will total 39,000 pounds (17,690 kg) net, or multiples thereof.

b. Each delivery unit, except as provided in IV.A.2.g., will be examined for compliance with the net weight requirements at time of checkloading.

c. The tare weight of all packing materials will be determined by weighing a representative sample of all packaging components such as plastic-film bags, clips, and fiberboard containers.

IV.A.2.

d. Fifteen (15) shipping containers will be selected at random from a delivery unit to determine net weight. The total net weight of the 15 shipping containers must be equal to or greater than 450 pounds (204.12 kg).

e. If the total net weight is less than 450 pounds (204.12 kg), the delivery unit will be rejected.

f. A rejected delivery unit may be reworked and reoffered one time only. However, if an individual shipping container in the sample of the reworked delivery unit has a net weight less than 30 pounds (13.61 kg), the delivery unit will be rejected.

g. As an alternative to test weighing at time of checkloading, the contractor may request on-line verification of net weights. Upon receiving the request, a Federal-State Supervisor (or their designee) will determine that the facilities and procedures are in accordance with the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

1. Visual Inspection. Frozen cooked commodity showing any evidence of defrosting, refreezing, or freezer deterioration will be rejected for use under this Specification.

2. Internal Product Temperature.

a. Requirements. The internal product temperature of the frozen cooked commodity must be 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower at the time of loading. Delivery units with internal product temperatures exceeding 2 °F (-16.7 °C) and up to 5 °F (-15 °C) will be tentatively rejected. Tentatively rejected delivery units may be returned to the freezer and the temperature reduced to 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower and reoffered one time only. Delivery units exceeding 5 °F (-15 °C) or delivery units that have been tentatively rejected and exceed 2 °F (-16.7 °C) when reoffered will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. Optional temperature verification. As an option to verifying internal product temperature at time of loading, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing product temperature-sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State Supervisor will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the contractors' current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in the applicable USDA, AMS, Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a USDA representative, in accordance with 7 CFR part 70, FSIS regulations, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A USDA representative may select samples for laboratory analyses or inspect the commodity at any point in transit and after delivery to point of destination. Inspection records must be complete and made available to USDA, as requested, to assure contract compliance.

IV.C.

2. Procedures. Inspection and checkloading required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1 must be performed by a Grader. Procedures to be followed and a schedule of fees for these services may be obtained by contacting the nearest USDA, AMS, Poultry Programs Grading Branch field office or the Chief of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 3938-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271. The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by USDA certificates issued by the Grader. The contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the Grader that the designated commodity to be shipped meets contract specifications.

V. UNITIZATION

Each delivery unit must be unitized (palletized and stretchwrapped) and comply with the following:

A. Pallets

Pallets must be good quality, wood, measuring 48 inches x 40 inches, nonreversible, flush stringer, and partial fourway entry. Each pallet of shipping containers must be stretchwrapped with plastic film in a manner that will secure each container and layer of containers on the pallet. Palletized product must be loaded in a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product. Pallet loads shall be stacked in a manner that minimizes the overhang of the shipping containers over the edges of the pallets and exposes the principal display panels to facilitate certification examinations.

B. Pallet Exchange

Contractors may arrange for pallet exchange with consignees; however, USDA is in no way responsible for such arrangements.

VI. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with this Specification, the applicable Announcement and Invitation, and Articles 56, 57, and 64 of USDA-1, as amended by the Announcement. In addition, the contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

A. Contract Compliance Stamp

Each shipping container must be identified with a USDA Contract Compliance stamp with the applicable certificate number. A Grader, or other authorized personnel under the supervision of the Grader, will stamp one end of each shipping container prior to shipment. If there is inadequate space available on either end of the shipping container, the stamp may be applied to a side of the container.

B. Grading Certificate

A copy of the original USDA Poultry Products Grading Certificate issued at time of checkloading must accompany each shipment.

1. Railcar or Piggyback. If shipment is by rail or piggyback, the certificate must be placed in the railcar or trailer for easy access to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

2. Trucks. If shipment is by truck, the driver must, upon delivery, give the certificate to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

C. Loading and Sealing of Vehicles

Loading must be in accordance with good commercial practices and the initial sealing must be done at origin under the supervision of a Grader. Thereafter, all delivery units--truck lot and less-than-truck lot (LTL) quantities--must be secured at all times prior to unloading with tamper proof, tamper resistant, serially numbered, high security seals. The contractor must maintain a record of each seal number used for truck lot and LTL delivery units. Additionally, the contractor must ensure that the applicable seal identification number is on each bill of lading, shipment manifest, or other delivery documents for each delivery destination.

When LTL delivery units are transported on the same trailer or railcar and destined for multiple recipients, the trailer or railcar must be sealed after each delivery. The seal number must be recorded on the appropriate delivery documents and correspond with the applied seal at the time of arrival at the next destination. It will be the responsibility of the contractor to provide a sufficient number of seals and ensure that the carrier service (truck or rail) secures the trailer or railcar after each delivery destination. Failure to seal the trailer or railcar after each stop may result in rejection of the shipment by the recipient agency at the next scheduled stop and rejection of any subsequent deliveries on the trailer or railcar.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The contractors are responsible for arranging for railcar deliveries of more than one delivery unit so that each delivery unit contained in the same railcar can be completely separated and sealed.

2. Truck or Piggyback. Truck or piggyback shipments must be sealed at origin. A delivery unit shipped by truck or piggyback which includes split deliveries to multiple destinations will require sealing after each drop in accordance with Section VI.C of this Specification.

D. Delivery Notification

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 56(c) of USDA-1, as amended by the applicable Announcement, the contractor must follow the instructions in the Notice to Deliver issued by the Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO) concerning delivery notification. Such notification and information of impending delivery are vital in proper execution of delivery. The contractor must

VI.D.

notify the State distributing agency and the consignee of shipment per instructions in the Notice to Deliver. For rail or piggyback shipments, notification shall be made on the day of shipment. For truck shipments, notification of the estimated arrival time should be made as far in advance of delivery as possible. In addition, for truck or piggyback shipments, the contractor must request and keep scheduled appointment(s). Unloading appointments for truck or piggyback shipments must be requested from the consignee contact party(ies) at least 24 hours in advance of delivery.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the contractor must notify the appropriate resident Grader and furnish applicable information.

2. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in store provided the destination in the Notice to Deliver and the place the contractor has the commodity in storage are the same. Inspection and certification by a Grader are also required for transfers in store.

E. Split Deliveries

The contractor is responsible to deliver the quantity stated on each Notice to Deliver to each destination. Contractors must provide to the Grader, at time of shipment, the number of boxes and pounds for each destination.

At the option of the contractor, a purchase unit with two or more Notices to Deliver (split deliveries) for multiple destinations may be delivered on separate trucks provided each truck ships the total quantity stated on the Notice to Deliver. Any additional costs will accrue to the contractor's account.

VII. DESTINATION EXAMINATION

The cost of a destination examination, before or after delivery, by a Grader on accepted product will be for the account of USDA. Costs for destination examinations of rejected delivery units will be for the account of the contractor. The USDA origin grader will make arrangements for destination examination prior to delivery.

A. Commodity Requirements

Before acceptance by consignee, the commodity may be examined by a Grader on a spot-check basis for temperature, condition, identity, and when applicable, count. The commodity may be examined for conformance to contract provisions at any time required by the Contracting Officer.

B. Temperature

The commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal product temperature not to exceed 10 °F (-12.2 °C) with no individual temperature exceeding 15 °F (-9.4 °C). Commodity not meeting these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

Craig A. Morris
Deputy Administrator
Poultry Programs

Attachments

EXHIBIT 1

USDA Labeled Shipping Containers

Marking Information: Shipping containers shall be marked substantially as shown below. Detailed labeling information is provided in EXHIBIT 2. Markings must be legibly preprinted, stamped, stenciled on containers, or printed on a separate pressure-sensitive label applied onto containers. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height and may be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor’s name, address, and phone number must be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor name and address must indicate the individual processing plant, the company headquarters, or the company address and phone number that handles product complaints.

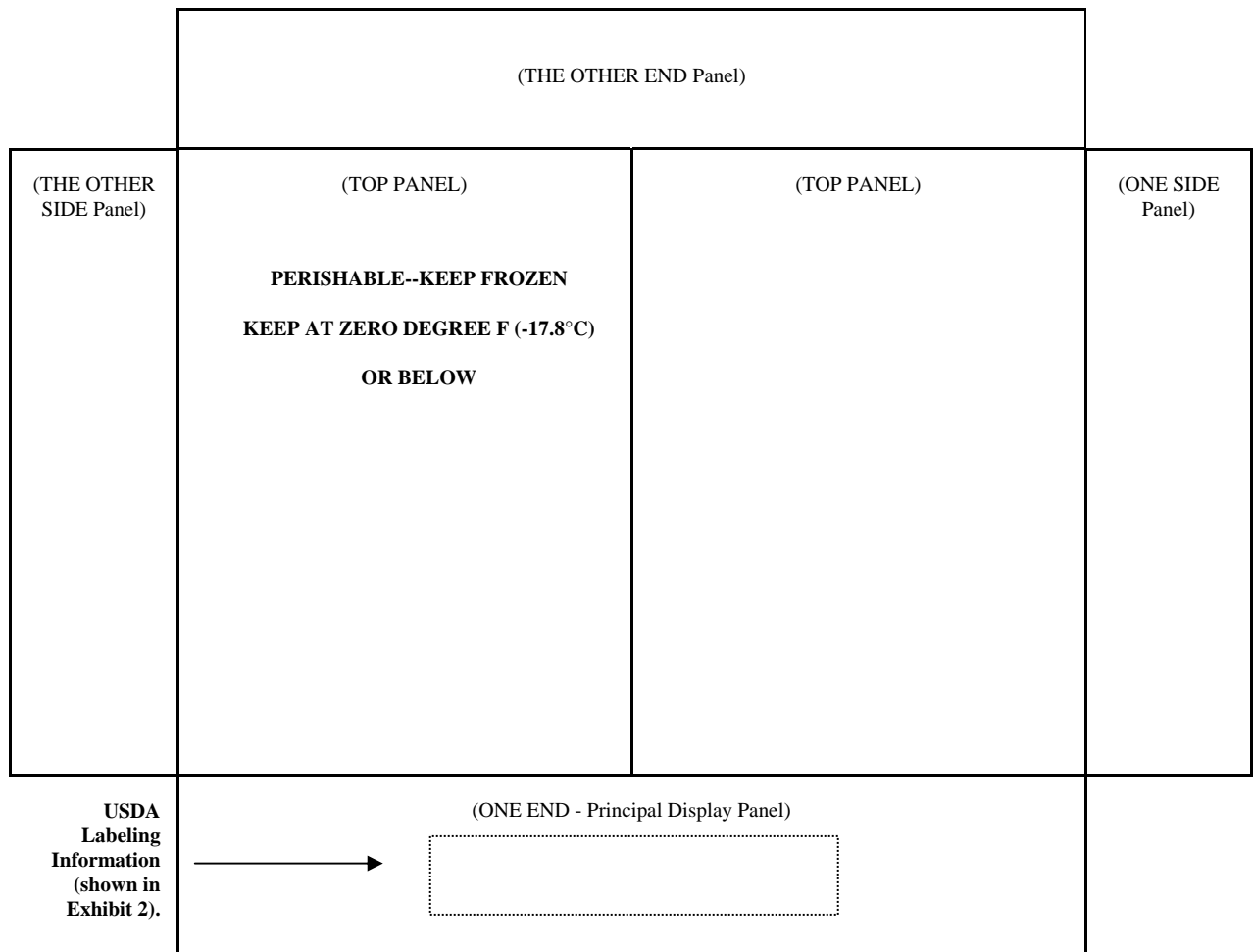


EXHIBIT 2
USDA Labeling Information for Chicken Fajita Strips

Marking Information: USDA labeling information must be printed on the principal display panel of each shipping container as provided in Exhibit 1. Markings must be legibly preprinted, stamped, stenciled on containers, or printed on a separate pressure-sensitive label applied to containers. The type of meat used (“Drumstick,” “Thigh,” and/or “Leg”) must be printed on each shipping container. The UPC 14-digit I 2/5 code (1 07 15001 01563 8), symbol and code, must be shown in the lower right-hand corner of the principal display panel. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, must be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height and may be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor’s name, address, and phone number must be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor name and address must indicate the individual processing plant, the company headquarters, or the company address and phone number that handles product complaints.



Frozen Fully-Cooked Boneless, Skinless
Chicken _____ Meat
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

Ingredients:

(Food Allergen Statement, if applicable
May Be Placed Here)

Processor’s
Name, Address, and Phone

Nutrition Facts Label
May Be placed Here

KEEP FROZEN

___ Bags Net Weight
30 LBS. (13.61 KG)

CONTRACT NO. _____
DATE PACKED Month, Day, and Year

UPC Symbol and Code

EXHIBIT 3
“Please Recycle” Symbol and Statement



**PLEASE
RECYCLE**

USDA SYMBOL

